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indeed, some geometers define them as being nothing save position, hence as constituting a relational order intimately connected with extension and quantity, but wholly distinct from these. Ere this, somebody has been itching to ask: "What of the continuity of visual space, and generally of real space, if all this is true?" The answer is our next duty.

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

The Moral Economy. RALPH BARTON PERRY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1909. Pp. xvi + 267. $1.25.

Professor Perry's little book is notable out of proportion to its size and pretensions. It is the most recent expression of the new spirit in ethics, which aims to get away from historic concepts and controversies back to the facts themselves of the moral life. Bishop Butler's saying is aptly taken as the motto of the book: "Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why then should we desire to be deceived?" The author's aim throughout is to exhibit morality as neither "a mystery nor a convention, but simply an observance of the laws of provident living," a rational meeting of the facts of life. For him, as for Socrates and the Greeks, moral conduct is enlightened conduct, the good man is the wise man. It is this naturalness and sanity of morality which he is concerned to emphasize in contrast to the Nietzschean view of it as artificial and restrictive, and this purpose he carries out with a singular simplicity and clearness of style and with a wealth of literary allusion which makes the book remarkable as an attractive and persuasive treatment of ethics. Although the work is called in some advertisements of it a text-book, the classification is hardly fitting, lacking as it does all the necessary machinery of paragraphing and bibliography: it is rather "a preliminary sketch of a system of ethics" adapted to all whom recent literature or social change has interested in the problem of rational living.

The topics discussed are essentially those of the usual text-book, though disguised under terms appropriate to the style of treatment: "Morality as the Organization of Life," "The Logic of the Moral Appeal," "The Order of Virtue," "The Moral Test of Progress," "Moral Criticism of Fine Art," "The Moral Justification of Religion." The author's standpoint might, perhaps, be characterized as that of naturalistic idealism or Græco-scientific idealism, combining as it does the Greek conception of morality as the natural flower of human life with the modern evolutionary account of its origin and process. Starting with the conception of the unit of life as the simple interest, or self-maintaining process, the condition for the moral life is found in the multiplication of interests which makes necessary their organization or economy. Goodness is relative to interest and consists in the satisfaction of the process or in the means

thereto. Moral goodness or virtue consists in "the fulfillment of an organization of interests." "Morality is only the method of carrying on the affair of life beyond a certain point of complexity," it is "the massing of interests against a reluctant cosmos." "Morality in its springs is absolutely one with that clinging to life which is the most deep-lying of all interests, and with that relish for life in which its goodness needs no philosopher's approval." The success of the author's exposition of the naturalness of the moral life is beyond doubt, but one may well question if he has not, in his zeal, lost sight of its morality. Throughout the whole of his chapter on the nature of goodness one looks in vain for any suggestion of the essential place of the personal attitude in morality: a machine might be a saint were it only complex enough in its reactions.

The same over-statement of naturalism is found in the chapter on obligation in spite of the great excellence of much of the treatment. The individual seeks the satisfaction of his interests, or the good. These interests are not desires for pleasure, but for objects as diverse as human natures are different. The rational, or moral, individual seeks to satisfy the greatest number of these interests without reference to whether they are now felt by him or are only potential, those of his wider vision either of himself or others. From the point of view of reason, our neighbor's interests are as important as our own future or present ones, the sole consideration being the conservation of the greatest number of interests without distinction of quality. For the author, as for Bentham, pushpin is as good as poetry save in so far as the cultivation of poetry may be a more inclusive aim which includes pushpin and adds other goods as well. The simple interest is an absolute unit and moral deliberation is only a problem in arithmetic, every interest to count for one and none for more than one. Apple pie is better than apples because it satisfies the desire for apples and also for crust, contains more of some simple unit of goodness than do its simpler constituents. In spite of his protest against abstractions one feels that Professor Perry has ventured far into hypothetical psychology in his reduction of moral choice to a calculation of the number of simple units of goodness contained in an act, especially in view of his recognition of the qualitative diversity of those interests, the satisfaction of any one of which constitutes a unit of goodness. A course of conduct which is chosen in view of several more or less conflicting interests and which may be said to conserve them as far as possible, is not merely the sum of those simpler actions, nor is the goodness of the complex act merely the sum of the goodness of the so-called constituents. The statement that *more* goodness is realized in the act adds nothing to the statement that this act is deliberately chosen. The use of the quantitative formula renders ethics no more exact as a science and serves rather to confuse its methods.

The justification of altruism could not be better stated than in the author's discussion of the objective validity of interests, in which he distinguishes between *prudence* as the far-sighted satisfaction of a given interest and *moral purpose* as the adoption of interests for their own sake. It is the familiar Kantian distinction, but it is expressed with remarkable

simplicity and force. Not so clear or convincing, however, is the discussion of the virtues, upon his classification of which, it is true, the author does not wish us to lay too much stress. But surely it is confusing to identify materialism with "the undue assertion of the present interest" and formalism with "the improvident exaggeration of ulterior motives," as well as to make the distinction between the material and formal aspects of morality coincide with that between a regard for a nearer and a more remote good. It is apparently the same naturalistic tendency to ignore the subjective or personal factor that finds expression in the assertion that "in terms of intelligence and incapacity, the basal excellence and the basal fault, it is possible to define the whole affair of which morality is the constructive phase." And again, "manufacturing, transportation, and banking, when conducted on a large scale, touch life at so many points, that he who seeks to gain power or wealth by means of them will gradually and without any abrupt change of motive approximate the method of disinterested service." This is truly an application of the quantitative measure of goodness which should be comforting in this age of large undertakings. The distinction of good and bad is only one of more or less.

In the last two chapters on art and religion the idealistic note predominates. Two quotations must suffice as expressive of the author's position. "It will have become plain that while art is the natural and powerful ally of morality, it does not itself provide any guarantee of proper control; in the interests of goodness, no man can surrender himself to it utterly. Goodness can not be cast upon a man like a spell; it is a work of rational organization, and can not be had without discipline, efficiency, and service." Religion in its highest phase is identified with moral idealism. "This idealism establishes itself upon an unequivocal acceptance of moral truth. It calls good good and evil evil, with all the finality which attaches to the human experience of these things, leaving no room for compromise. Its faith lies in the expectation that the world shall become good through the elimination of evil; it manifests itself in the resolution to hasten that time. . . . Life is not a spiritual exercise the results of which are discounted in advance; but is actually creative, fashioning and perfecting a good that has never been."

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Les Systèmes logiques et la logistique. C. LUCAS DE PESLOÜAN. Paris: Marcel Rivière. 1909. Pp. 416.

M. de Pesloüan does not like logistic, but he does like Pascal, and so he becomes a critic of logistic in the spirit of Pascal, half admitting "it is not shocking for the reasons found afterward, but the reasons are found only because it is shocking." The first expression of this dislike was four letters published in the *Revue de Philosophie* for 1908, of which the first three were reviewed in this JOURNAL (Vol. V., pp. 21–23). The fourth deals with the confusions into which logisticians have fallen as a result of the Cantorian paradoxes; their willingness to dispense with the principle of contradiction, the concept of class, etc., and concludes with a criticism of